Nimisho'nimishah: - The Sovereign Architect of Time

(ref. Sri Vishnu Sahsranama sloka # 23/214,215)

In the philosophical framework the compound name ***Nimisho'nimishah*** from the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama is not an abstract paradox, but a literal testament to the absolute sovereignty of Lord Sri Hari (Vishnu) over the cosmos. These names are viewed not as illusions, but as actual, functional attributes of the Supreme Being.

Nimishah: The Principle of Inward Withdrawal and Dissolution…

The term ***nimisha*** defines the smallest empirical measure of time—the fracture of a second required for a physical blink. As *Nimishah*, the Supreme God is the efficient cause (*Nimitta Karana*) of cosmic contraction:

- **Cosmic Dissolution (Laya):** The "closing of the divine eye" represents the literal, periodic winding down of the material universe (*Jada Prakriti*) into a state of restful latency.
- **The Regulator of Bondage:** For the individual soul (*Jiva*), *Nimishah* denotes the Lord acting as the inner controller (*Antaryami*). He temporarily suspends the soul's external awareness, granting it the restorative state of deep, ignorant sleep (*Sushupti*).

Animishah: The Principle of Supreme Vigilance and Maintenance

In stark opposition to the fluctuating state of the dependent soul stands ***Animishah***—the Unblinking, Ever-Awake Reality. This attribute reinforces the eternal, immutable distinction between the Supreme Ruler (God) and *Jiva* (individual soul):

- **Cosmic Sustenance (Sthiti):** The "unblinking eye" signifies the constant, active generation and maintenance of the cosmos. The Lord never falls into spiritual slumber, material bondage, or the darkness of ignorance (*Avidya*).
- **The Sovereign Guardian:** ***Animishah*** illuminates the protective nature of the Deity. His gaze is an unceasing, active shield over those bound by devotion (*Bhakti*). While the universe sleeps, His alert consciousness ensures the

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perfect execution of cosmic justice (*Karma*) and guards the seeker against spiritual relapse.

The transition from *Nimishah* to *Animishah* represents the ultimate refuge for the soul. The same Lord who closes His eyes to dissolve the material suffering of the universe (*Nimishah*) keeps an eternal, unblinking, and loving vigil over the aspiring devotee (*Animishah*), ultimately guiding the dependent *Jiva* across the ocean of transmigration.

The Legend of King Nimi's Curse…

Lord Vishnu is the one who immortalised and made King Nimi famous. This directly ties back into the etymology of the twin names ***Nimishah-Animishah*** and is rooted in an extraordinary Puranic (Vishnu Purana) event involving King Nimi of the Solar Dynasty (the ancestor of Janaka and Sita).

King Nimi was a highly righteous ruler who wanted to perform a grand sacrifice (*Yajna*). He approached Sage Vashistha to preside over it, but Vashistha was already occupied with a ritual for Lord Indra and asked the king to wait. Because the cosmic timing for the *Yajna* was fleeting, Nimi proceeded with other sages. An angered Vashistha later cursed King Nimi to instantly lose his physical body.

The Divine Intervention of Lord Vishnu

After the successful completion of the *Yajna*, the Devas, pleased with the sacrifice, invoked Lord Vishnu to grant a boon to King Nimi's disembodied soul.

- The Devas offered to restore Nimi's soul back into a physical body.
- King Nimi declined, stating that physical bodies are subject to attachment, decay, and eventual misery. Instead, he

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requested to reside in a place where he could constantly perceive the universe without being bound by flesh.

Lord Vishnu gracefully granted his wish by placing King Nimi's consciousness inside the eyelids of all living entities.

The Connection to Nimisho'nimishah

Because of Vishnu's boon, the continuous opening and closing of eyelids became a universal mechanism:

1. **The Time Unit (Nimisha):** The very act of blinking was named a "*Nimisha*" in honour of the king. In Vedic cosmology, a *nimisha* became the standard foundational unit of time (roughly 0.21 seconds).
2. **Nimishah:** As the master of this mechanism, Lord Vishnu is called *Nimishah*—the one who commands the blinking (dissolution/rest) of the universe. That historical Puranic event is precisely why Lord Vishnu is called *NIMISHAH* (निमिषः) in the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama.
3. **Animishah:** Concurrently, Vishnu is *Animishah*—the one who is completely unblinking, standing majestically above the constraints of time and the biological reflex He created for mortals.

By turning a curse into a universal cosmic law, Lord Vishnu ensured that King Nimi's name would be uttered every single time humanity measures a fraction of a second or blinks an eye. By granting that unique boon to King Nimi following his profound detachment and disembodied penance, Lord Vishnu inextricably bound the king's memory to the universal mechanics of time and nature.

The Pure Alignment of Name and Legend

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- **The Etymological Link:** Because King Nimi's consciousness was stationed within the eyelids of all living beings, the biological act of blinking came to be known as a "*Nimisha*".
- **The Divine Owner of the Name:** When the Sahasranama calls Lord Vishnu *Nimishah*, it structurally honours Him as the supreme benefactor who engineered this phenomenon. He is the author of King Nimi's fame.

It is a stunning example of how Hindu scriptural names bridge intense metaphysical concepts with actual historical-puranic narratives. This story is the exact historical anecdote (*Purana Itihasa*) that provides the foundational context for the name *Nimishah*.

In the tradition of Vedic chanting, every name in the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama has two distinct dimensions that make it complete:

- **The Metaphysical Meaning (Tattva):** The high philosophy, such as the view of Vishnu controlling cosmic dissolution (*Laya*) and regulating the soul's states of rest.
- **The Historical Anecdote (Charitra):** The real-world narrative event, which is this exact account of King Nimi, his disembodied penance, and the subsequent boon.

By linking the high philosophy of time and creation directly to the story of King Nimi, the name ***Nimishah*** serves as a permanent scriptural monument to a beautiful truth: the Supreme Lord loves His devotees so deeply that He rewrites the laws of nature just to make them famous.

"Naimiṣe 'nimiṣa-kṣetre..."

In the sacred forest of **Naimiṣāraṇya**, which is the abode of the Animisha—Lord Vishnu - He is called ***Nimishah*** because at

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Naimisharanya, Bhagawan Vishnu destroyed an entire army of Asuras (specifically the demon Durjaya and his forces) within a single ***nimish*** (the blink of an eye). Because the demonic forces were eliminated in a mere fraction of a minute, the entire forest took the name ***Naimisharanya* or *Nimesharanya***.

The name *Nimishah* in the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama is celebrated through two profound historical anecdotes.

First, it honors the detached King Nimi, whose consciousness Lord Vishnu placed within the eyelids of all living entities, turning the blink of an eye into a time-unit called *'Nimisha'*.

Second, it commemorates the holy land of *Naimisharanya* (Naimiṣe-Animuṣa-Kṣetre), where Bhagawan Vishnu vanquished a fierce army of demons within a single *nimish* (the blink of an eye).

Thus, both the universal reflex of time and the most sacred forest on Earth stand as eternal monuments to the swift, protective vigilance of the Supreme God Vishnu.

The Kshetra of the Ever-Awake: Because the Lord protected the sages by striking down evil in a blink, the forest became known as ***Animisha-kshetra*** (the field of the unblinking, ever-vigilant Lord). It is the place where, His watchful eye constantly guards the 88,000 rishis who gathered there to perform sacrifices.

At the sacred *Purushottama Kshetra* of Puri (Odisha) the profound uniqueness of Lord Jagannath lies in His divine iconography. Carved from the sacred Margosa (Neem) tree, the deities manifest with intentionally incomplete limbs and prominent, circular eyes entirely devoid of eyelids. This majestic form is the ultimate visual expression of the name ***'Nimisho-Animishah'***. By appearing without eyelids, Lord

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Jagannath declares His nature as the eternally awake, ever-alert, and ever-vigilant Supreme Being, who maintains an uninterrupted, loving vigil over His devotees for all eternity."

It is a sublime divine alignment that this meditation on the name ***'Nimisho-Animishah'*** coincides with the sacred ***Purushottama Maasa*** currently underway.

viṣṇuṃ jiṣṇuṃ mahāviṣṇuṃ prabhaviṣṇuṃ maheśvaram |
anekarūpa daityāṃtaṃ namāmi puruṣottamam ||

श्री कृष्णार्पणमस्तु

नाहं कर्ता हरिः कर्ता - हरिः कर्ता हि केवलम्

हरी सर्वोत्तम - वायू जीवोत्तम

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